

# THE THEATERS

It may have been only a comet that flashed across the scene only to lose itself in the murkiness of the broken, where they keep the productions that did not last.

But it was a ray of light. One production after another has been without effect in dispelling the theatrical gloom of the present season.

Play patrons have stood on the curb and frankly mourned the stock companies. In a stock company production you could always depend on the author, tried and true, however you might feel about the cast.

"Hawthorne, U. S. A." brimful of patriotism, heart interest, laughter and athletics, gives you, for a single price of admission, every kind of drama in existence from a Zenda romance to a production by the Hanlon brothers. It is highly entertaining, though frankly irresponsible. Every now and then a scene is introduced in which the play appears to be burlesquing its own plot.

Its success on the opening night was emphatic. No demonstration was negated that might serve to convince the players that their efforts found appreciation.

But that cold, clammy influence, the second thought intervened somewhere. Those who had seen and enjoyed the piece were unable to describe it in a way that would carry conviction to other possible play patrons in any great numbers and the bureau of explanation went into action before the week was half over. Theories as to why a play does not command attention at a time like this, when the climate is so warm, are abundant. The climate invites to out-door recreation, the election whose discussion has caused peculiar interest is a social less expensive form of entertainment are taking unreasonable toll from the pleasure-seeking pulse; stock companies have set such a high standard of popular entertainment that many people fail to see a difference in value corresponding to difference in price. And, money in an incidental, off-hand way, it might be mentioned that the plays presented so far this season have not been very good.

"Hawthorne" is full of reminiscences. It has the gay, whimsical, "hokey humor" which did not succeed, and the breezy impudence of "Wainwright," which did.

The mood scene was almost a paraphrase of the Wainwright range to the booby and pinch-wads who decline to slip their case into the till of the smooth guy—a thousand apologies! That George Cohan vocabulary is irresistibly infectious!

If "Hawthorne" fails to impress itself as art, there is no chance to question its pre-eminence as athletics. When Douglas Fairbanks vaults over a high stone wall at the close of the first act admiration is mixed with doubt whether he can keep up the pace he has set for himself. But the fight later in the play, a fight in whose rehearsal it is claimed that Mr. Alsop broke two ribs, is a revelation of physical courage and skill that is sure sooner or later to cause some impression on the person to rise from his seat and ask if there is a doctor in the audience.

It may be true that the leap over the wall in the first act is accomplished with the aid of a spring-board. There can be no suspicion that the flying leap with which Mr. Fairbanks bears Mr. Alsop to the floor is accomplished with the aid of wires like an aerial ballet. It is obviously a risk of life and limb.

The reckless emperor of the amusement-seeking world is tending toward the mood which called forth the Roman gladiatorial games. Steps may be necessary to prevent some enterprising manager attempting to lure the public by killing an actor at each performance.

Whether or not the play's offense against logic is beyond condemnation must be ascertained elsewhere. The auditor's logical sense is not, as a rule, exacting, so long as he is being excitedly entertained. The fact stands that the production was a break in the monotony of try-out performances which have discouraged the audiences of this city, who not so long ago were eager to assemble to welcome a new presentation. The play was well received, and a competent cast permitted no harrowing incidents. Washington would soon become a gas first-night town once more if all the initial presentations were as spirited in theme and as smoothly acted as this.

"The Chimes of Normandy" was in line with the spirit of reverence for the past which has taken possession of producing managers. The opera does not lose its old admirers, and finds favor even among those who do not permit their taste to be influenced by tradition. Henrietta Crossman, whose appearance in "The Real Thing" proved a pleasure to so many people, might be encouraged to revive "Mistress Nell" if rediscovery were as easy in the drama as it is in the music.

PHILANDER JOHNSON.

DRAMA LEAGUE OF AMERICA.—The establishment of a new league in the drama is to be undertaken in Washington in addition to the several local supervisory organizations already in evidence. It takes the form of a chapter of the Drama League of America. This organization in two years has attained an affiliated membership of more than 50,000, largely in Chicago, its birthplace, and other middle western cities. Now, with active eastern branches in Boston, Brooklyn and Philadelphia, it is organizing in both New York and Washington. While most efforts to improve the standards of theatrical entertainment have been through censorship and direct exclusion, the Drama League idea is to censor nothing whatever, but on the other hand to attract and support what is good. It is, in other words, an organized effort to develop larger audiences for the production which it pronounces worthy. It recognizes that managers cannot produce the better things unless they receive support at the box office and that the large numbers of the most discriminating element of the public stay from the theatre through indifference shown out of too frequent disappointment. The aim of the league is to serve the whole great public by serving its highest standards at the same time aiding the high-minded producers in the solution of their financial problem. The method by which these standards are to be ascertained is as follows:

Each local center, which is self-governing, elects a playing committee of five or more well qualified members with representative viewpoints, whose duty it is to attend first-night performances. If the committee considers the play worthy as a work of art, as a profitable and significant discussion of some timely or vital theme, or as an especially excellent piece of high comedy or farce, it publishes and mails to each member of the league con-

ter a bulletin announcing the opinion and giving reasons for it. As the combined opinion of five or more educated people, this bulletin is presumably a rule to the occasional theatergoer in his selection of plays to attend. It differs from the newspaper review in that its function is to deal only with productions of exceptional excellence, concentrating attention on these and saying nothing in regard to any others.

The other branch of the league work consists of stimulating, in schools, colleges, clubs and among individuals as well, the study of dramatic literature and criticism. In the drama study department appear the names of several prominent college professors.

There are a teachers' department, a department of plays for amateurs, a library department and a lecture bureau, furnishing to each member study outlines, reading lists, and the privilege of lectures by the ablest scholars and critics in their field, all of whom, with the rest of the officers of the league, give their services without remuneration. The Washington Center will shortly hold its organization meeting and elect officers. The first bulletin of the league to reach Washington this season is an enthusiastic endorsement of "Kindling," which the Messrs. Shubert will bring to the Belasco Theater as an early attraction.

AN INVOLUNTARY HUMORIST.—Stanley James has a knack of telling funny stories off the stage as well as in the play. His latest trick he was growing during his experience with the stock company the past summer.

"Managers Metzerott has a colored poster, George by name," said Mr. James recently. "And George is one of the most original involuntary humorists I ever listened to."

"The day of the first exhibition of the Lyman Howe picture show at the Columbia late this summer, I asked George if he had any programs of the pictures to be shown."

"Now, sah, Mistah Stanley," replied George, "taint none set yuh yit."

"Well, do they have a tryout?"

"'N-n-nah, sah, Mistah Stanley," said George, "b-b-but I think I heard 'em say it was 'bout de sinkin' o' dat steamboat, de Mechanic."

"It was a new one on me, but I went inside and sure enough they were showing the pictures of the burial of the old battleship Maine."

PRESS AGENT PURLINGS.—Blanche Baird, the burlesque star, is "a fend for Omar Khayyam." His lines are ever on her lips, his thoughts seem ever to disturb her mind. "If we haven't everything else in burlesque beat to an atomic fizzle," she is reported to have said, "you may wallop my reputation as a

critic and send me to sleep with yesterday's 7,000 years."

William Collier is noted for his vanity in dress. He is said to be a regular cut-up with Dame Fashion. "My garb costs me much," he says; "but what wots it. Mayhap I might put them over with a less exacting and more liberal critic. I can't believe that clothes are indispensable to pure art."

Ernest Zimbalst, the violin virtuoso, who has charmed his hearers in this country with his consummate art, is not a man of one idea. He is said to have invented a musical aerophone, with which to recover the larklike notes of great singers that have been long since lost in the clouds. At this point the press agent was unfortunately interrupted by the explosion of the typewriter.

HAS ITS STANDARD.—Henry Kolker is one of the few American actors who have starred successfully in Australia. This engagement, undertaken in the spirit of adventure, came, however, very nearly being his undoing.

When he first arrived in Melbourne, he was informed that before the audiences could judge how good he might be, he should first appear in "The Silver King." Now "The Silver King" was not in his repertoire, and he tried to excuse himself by saying that he had no time to learn it. The manager, however, was not to be deterred, and he was told that it was a theatrical custom for every visiting actor to appear in that piece, and that the audience would not be so easily deceived. The predicament they got into, particularly when his back for friends arrived with their wives, together with the complications that arise, form the background of a very funny play. The American version was made by Helen Kraft and Frank Mandel. The staging has been done by Miss

Pamela Gaytherne, the English comedienne who came over to this country to take the leading role in one of the New Theater's productions; Isabel MacGregor, a Scotch actress; Gwendolyn Piers and Vera Finlay, who are no less as women of exceptional beauty. John Findlay, the well known character actor; William Kotelle, Mark Smith and George Graham are in the cast.

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A varied bill of refined vaudeville, ranging from the popular mirth-maker to melodies of classic excellence, artistically rendered is promised this week at the Cosmos Theater, rather than a featured headline attraction, with supplemental acts. Among the numbers that appeal to a good taste are the offering of song and instrumental selection in violin, flute and piano, by the Three Musical Maynards; Ed E. L. Loney and company, in a humorous comedy of the tabloid type, "It Pays to Be Polite," and Jere McAdams and company, in a patriotic musical number with scenic environment, "The National Soldiers' Home at Washington."

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The musical presentation of Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, "On the Road to Mandalay," with a startling climax in the form of a classic terpsichorean offering known as the Burma barbed dance, by Dela Stacey, for five seasons the leading woman with James T. Powers, supported by Nat K. Walters, is the announced feature extra-musical of the Casino Theater bill for this week. The act is said to be replete with gorgeous costumes, scenic beauty and a wonderful and sensational dance, which had its origin in the religious customs of Burma. Buddha's "Advance" notices herald the act in glowing terms of praise.

Supplemental features include Ruth Wright in a dainty offering of selected songs; Dave Winton, with novel features of burlesque juggling; Russ Forth and Ralph Parle in a merry offering of path and melody; the Collier brothers, in a "whirlwind novelty of unexpected things"; and Young and Manning, in a plantation ditty entitled "A Day in Dixie." Now an enjoyable motion picture plays are also promised.

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Gus Fay and a company of thirty-nine assistant funmakers, known as "The Gayety Girls," will be the attraction at the Gayety Theater this week, presenting act musical farces called "One Night in Paris" and "The Rest Cure." The first sketch is laid in the Cafe de Ameri, Paris, where Otto (Mr. Fay), a millionaire American "sausage manufacturer," comes for his first lesson in eighteenth-century money spending in the French capital. Here he meets the "Gayety Girls," the cabaret (Miss Clara Rackett), who recognizes in him a profitable acquaintance. She reveals to Otto the ways of the night life of the Montmartre district, that by morning the little German comes to the realization of a rest cure, and this he tries to obtain. The next act of Dr. Cutlet, but Miss Pontaine follows him and the nurses manifestly importuned from the London Coliseum, giving an instrumental performance, which created a furore in Europe. Tom Dingle, the Austria terpsichorean expert, assisted by the Emerald sisters, will appear in a lively vocal and dancing novelty; Ruby Raymond and Bobby Heath, King George and his troops, in a Dixieland plantation pastime feature; the Great Ergott and his Lilliputians, in grotesque European risley feats, and Gertrude Holmes and Robert Buchanan, in their fanciful act, "The Girl of 1847." The pipe organ recitals will occur at 1:30 and 7:30 and intermissions. The chief Animated Weekly photoplays motion pictures will be the Red Sox-Giants Boston game, the "Gayety Girls" in a series of thrilling airplane flight at Staten Island, Roosevelt's arrival at Chicago, the Columbus day sailors' land parade at New York, a "votes for women" demonstration on Tower Hill, London; the departure of the great battleship fleet, Bryan at Goshen, Ind., and Jeff de An-

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The scenic effects are said to be beautiful, and the gateway in the Wichita mountains, displayed in the fourth act, is especially elaborate.

Cosmos.

A varied bill of refined vaudeville, ranging from the popular mirth-maker to melodies of classic excellence, artistically rendered is promised this week at the Cosmos Theater, rather than a featured headline attraction, with supplemental acts. Among the numbers that appeal to a good taste are the offering of song and instrumental selection in violin, flute and piano, by the Three Musical Maynards; Ed E. L. Loney and company, in a humorous comedy of the tabloid type, "It Pays to Be Polite," and Jere McAdams and company, in a patriotic musical number with scenic environment, "The National Soldiers' Home at Washington."

Any Francis will invade old Ireland for a humorous offering of song and Celtic wit; Pollette and Wicks will furnish a chatter comedy of the snapper, rascal and variety, headed with songs, and the Tree Vagabonds, are scheduled for a novelty of unique conception, featuring matrimony. The noted Pathé Weekly Review of current events of the world will be the feature among the motion picture offerings.

Casino.

The musical presentation of Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, "On the Road to Mandalay," with a startling climax in the form of a classic terpsichorean offering known as the Burma barbed dance, by Dela Stacey, for five seasons the leading woman with James T. Powers, supported by Nat K. Walters, is the announced feature extra-musical of the Casino Theater bill for this week. The act is said to be replete with gorgeous costumes, scenic beauty and a wonderful and sensational dance, which had its origin in the religious customs of Burma. Buddha's "Advance" notices herald the act in glowing terms of praise.

Supplemental features include Ruth Wright in a dainty offering of selected songs; Dave Winton, with novel features of burlesque juggling; Russ Forth and Ralph Parle in a merry offering of path and melody; the Collier brothers, in a "whirlwind novelty of unexpected things"; and Young and Manning, in a plantation ditty entitled "A Day in Dixie." Now an enjoyable motion picture plays are also promised.

Gayety.

Gus Fay and a company of thirty-nine assistant funmakers, known as "The Gayety Girls," will be the attraction at the Gayety Theater this week, presenting act musical farces called "One Night in Paris" and "The Rest Cure." The first sketch is laid in the Cafe de Ameri, Paris, where Otto (Mr. Fay), a millionaire American "sausage manufacturer," comes for his first lesson in eighteenth-century money spending in the French capital. Here he meets the "Gayety Girls," the cabaret (Miss Clara Rackett), who recognizes in him a profitable acquaintance. She reveals to Otto the ways of the night life of the Montmartre district, that by morning the little German comes to the realization of a rest cure, and this he tries to obtain. The next act of Dr. Cutlet, but Miss Pontaine follows him and the nurses manifestly importuned from the London Coliseum, giving an instrumental performance, which created a furore in Europe. Tom Dingle, the Austria terpsichorean expert, assisted by the Emerald sisters, will appear in a lively vocal and dancing novelty; Ruby Raymond and Bobby Heath, King George and his troops, in a Dixieland plantation pastime feature; the Great Ergott and his Lilliputians, in grotesque European risley feats, and Gertrude Holmes and Robert Buchanan, in their fanciful act, "The Girl of 1847." The pipe organ recitals will occur at 1:30 and 7:30 and intermissions. The chief Animated Weekly photoplays motion pictures will be the Red Sox-Giants Boston game, the "Gayety Girls" in a series of thrilling airplane flight at Staten Island, Roosevelt's arrival at Chicago, the Columbus day sailors' land parade at New York, a "votes for women" demonstration on Tower Hill, London; the departure of the great battleship fleet, Bryan at Goshen, Ind., and Jeff de An-

Quality and quantity are announced as the principal factors in the construction of the "Stars of Stage and Screen" attraction at the Lyceum Theater this week. The fact that it requires two large railroad cars to transport the scenic equipment, the fact that it is the largest of the company's offering. It comprises "A Trip to the Catskills" and "The Regatta," two plays of burlesque variety. The costumes, electric devices, picturesque groupings and melodious ensembles are the company includes Blanche Baird, Mike McDonald, Eddie Dale, Louie Pearson, Harvey Taylor, Charles Reibel, La Belle Helene, Tiny Dunes, Lauretta Caxton, George Hall, Rose Ham